



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

MONDAY, 8th AUGUST TO FRIDAY, 12th AUGUST 2011
AND
MONDAY, 22nd AUGUST TO FRIDAY, 26th AUGUST 2011

CALL FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

The *Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program* was established following the signing of an agreement of understanding between UMass Lowell and Queen's University Belfast in March 2009. The objective is to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the life of the Irish in Ireland before and after the Great Famine, and the role played by the Irish in the development of the USA during the 19th century. We intend to commence fieldwork this August with a week-long excavation in Lowell to investigate the site of an early 19th-century Irish settlement at St. Patrick's Church.

**WE ARE OFFERING THREE PLACEMENTS FOR STUDENTS FROM UMASS
LOWELL TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EXCAVATION**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
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INTRODUCTION

In 1822 a group of 30 Irish labourers led by Hugh Cumiskey arrived in the new industrial town of Lowell to assist with the excavation of the Pawtucket and Merrimack canals. By 1831 their numbers had swelled to over 400 and Kirk Boott, mill manager, had donated a plot of company land for a Catholic church – St. Patrick's Church. This event marked the permanent settlement of the Irish in the town, with the area around the church becoming known as the "Irish Acre," the "Paddy Camps" or "New Dublin".

The old church was constructed in what had been a shanty town, with the cabins of the Irish immigrants built right up to the sides of the church. The area was landscaped and changed when the old timber church was replaced in 1854 with a neo-Gothic stone church. From cartographic and pictorial evidence it would seem, however, that the area to the front of the church has remained unchanged since that time and remains in lawn.

In 2010, 6 students from UMass Lowell partnered with faculty members for the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork of Queen's University, Belfast to excavate the lawn in front of St. Patrick's. During their week long excavation they uncovered 1300 artefacts from the 18th and 19th century. The excavation drew a great deal of interest from the local community and the media.

As a result of this successful project, we are looking for students to participate in Phase II of the Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program this August. Phase II will consist of a week of excavation at St. Patrick's in Lowell and a week of excavation in Crossan, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, at the Cummysky homestead.

COURSE CONTENT

The work at St Patrick's Church will be undertaken from Monday, 8th August to Friday, 12th August 2011. The work in Northern Ireland will take place from Monday, 20th August, to Friday, 26th August. Excavation is an important method of gathering archaeological data and understanding sites in the field; indeed, to some it is the fundamental skill of the archaeologist. **Students participating on the program, however, do not need to have gained prior experience of working on an archaeological excavation.** This is a training excavation. As such, participants will be provided with introductory training in excavation methodology such as identifying, excavating and recording individual layers and features in the soil (archaeological contexts), relating the contexts to each other in a time sequence (stratigraphy), and the recording of associated artefacts.

The main objective of the exercise is to teach the practical skills of archaeological excavation in the field. This is a fundamental tool for gathering archaeological data; as such, an understanding of the methods of excavation and their limitations in practice is basic to the discipline. The excavation is also a research exercise and by the end of the fieldwork period you should be familiar with how a research strategy is developed and implemented in the field. You should also be aware of how the results obtained in the field can help to increase our understanding of a particular monument, the period in which it belongs, and our knowledge of the archaeology of the region in which it is set.

COSTS

The cost of the program for students is \$1500 to cover tuition. All other costs, including accommodations, airfare and meals will be covered by the Center for Irish Partnership and the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork.